

"Shame Makes the World Go Around": *Performed and Embodied (Gendered) Class Disgust in Morrissey's "Slum Mums"*

Aileen Dillane, Martin J. Power, and Eoin Devereux

"Being a member of society is an essential condition for becoming a conscious being and creating music"
(John Blacking 1995, p.51)

Introduction

This chapter explores how a pop song can become (and remain) a critical site for counter-hegemonic expression, through the creative manipulation of discursive, structural, sonic, and somatic elements. 'The Slum Mums', by popular music artist Morrissey, deals with the contempt felt for lone female mothers on welfare in the UK under the New Labour governments of the 1990s and 2000s. Rather than providing a straightforward critique of this 'contempt', Morrissey deftly creates a song whose meaning relies on the ambiguous interrelationship between the socio-political context, the lyrical content, and musical structure and sound as they relate to issues of gendered embodiment in particular. To this end, we locate our work within what might be understood as a social constructivist approach, leaning into scholars who argue for embodied perspectives. We argue that it is through the careful subversion of expectations that the song provides a powerful critique of gendered, class disgust.

We begin by exploring gendered class discourse in the UK at the time of the song's release in 2004, rather than going straight to the song, as we believe it needs to be fully contextualized in order to be 'read' critically,. This is followed by an introduction to Morrissey, an artist who demonstrates a strong track

record in championing the marginalized and in offering counter-hegemonic stances on a variety of contemporary social, political and economic issues. We then begin our analysis of the song with a close reading of the lyrics. Because of the possible ambiguity in interpreting Morrissey's lyrics (which on face value may seem to support as opposed to counter, prevalent, negative discourses on female welfare recipients), we then examine the song's structure to illustrate (on the macro structural and discursive level and the micro textual and somatic level), how this is not actually the case. We conclude that as 'Slum Mums' pre-empted the intensification of gendered and classed disgust discourses (cf 'Benefits Street' Channel 4 Television, 2014) and the ever increasing demonization of welfare recipients, the song is potentially even more important and efficacious now.

Interpreting 'Slum Mums'

The 'Slum Mums' was released as a 'B Side' to Morrissey's single 'I Have Forgiven Jesus' (Sanctuary Records, 2004). Its lyrics were written by Morrissey and its music co-composed by Boz Boorerⁱ and then bassist Gary Day. The placement of the song on the B-side of the single perhaps indicates Morrissey understanding that this song would never be a hit in its own right; yet he was nonetheless ensuring its further circulation. The song received little more than a lukewarm reception (Goddard 2009, p. 397) largely failing to impress fans or music critics. Whether it was the song structure itself, or the challenging message it carried that proved unpopular, is difficult to establish. From our perspective, however, it is these very elements that make this song a prime example of social critique that resonates beyond its date of creation.

In *Music for Pleasure*, Frith (1998, p.103) argues that it is “possible to read back from lyrics to the social forces that produced them” (see also Frith and Goodwin 1990). While we engage in a close lyrical reading of ‘Slum Mums’, we adhere to Brackett’s cautionary note (2000, p.192) to “consciously avoid considering the lyrics in isolation” which often forms “the basis for the interpretation of popular songs” and which can end up producing a reductive and incomplete analysis. At the same time, we accept that signification can, depending on the lyricist, most directly occur through words, at least initially, and that it is through language that subjects are most obviously discursively produced and reproduced. To this end, we focus first on the lyrics for ‘meaning’ but then later explicate the role of music, instrumentation and, crucially, the grain of Morrissey’s voice, to underscore how these discrete elements operate as part of an efficacious complex. Such an interpretation also involves, as Brackett (2000, pp.171-172) explains, “explicating both a ‘primary ‘ level of signification such as ‘positional values’ and the interconnection of this level with ‘secondary’ levels such as ‘positional implications, ‘emotive connotations’ and ‘rhetorical connotations’”. Layers of meaning and feeling are created through the interconnectedness of text, context, sound and embodied performance.

In other words, a song, even one as replete with social commentary as ‘Slum Mums’, does not simply comprise or represent a particular verbalised discourse. A song is, first and foremost, a musical event with sonic and lyrical-melodic components. Obviously, different listeners focus to varying degrees on different aspects of a given song. For some, the lyrics take precedent, while for others, the words may not even register with the focus instead, perhaps, on the bass line or

the harmonic movement of the rhythm guitar, or simply on the sensuousness of the lead vocals.ⁱⁱ A song is also meant to be performed. A pop song, as form and genre, has a melodic contour and harmonic topography, and like all music has a complex signification system of its own (Cooke 1959; Middleton 1990; Moore, 2003 & 2012). This point cannot be overstated. Any musical analysis and criticism of a song has to consider both the lyrical and musical content in multimodal relation to each other, as their affective dimensions and their meaning are intertwined at numerous levels. Further, in the context of this specific analysis, both the music and lyrics of 'Slum Mums' engage with gender and class discourses reflexively and reflectively in mutually constitutive ways. As Blacking argues, "music cannot express anything extramusical unless the experience to which it refers already exists in the mind of the listener" (1995, pp.35).

Part of the larger argument we are making is that Morrissey is someone with considerable cultural and symbolic capital who has a keen sense not just of discourses around class disgust, but also, of the manner in which songs can both underpin and rehearse *or* construct and subvert societal beliefs and behaviours. The structure and performance of 'Slum Mums' may be interpreted as indicating Morrissey's appreciation of how music, on one hand, operates on a profoundly visceral and somatic level in bypassing cognition and interpretation (Ortony et al 1998 & 2004), while on the other, is at its most potent when the emotions of a particular discursive stance become resonate and amplified through music systems that are also themselves culturally constructed. Adorno's argument that all popular music produced under capitalism is derivative and incapable of

critique (2001) has, of course, been systematically challenged, though such a belief continues to persist with many aficionados of 'high art' forms. The message of 'Slum Mum', wrapped up in a short, ostensibly musically unremarkable pop song of the early noughties suggests the opposite. The song demonstrates a keen awareness of its neoliberal, socio-historical moment and, by extension, the limits and potential paradoxes of its form (and its performance).

In the following section we first examine the discourse of welfare and poverty at the time of the song's composition and release in the UK. Morrissey is then inserted into this socio-political context as a 'raconteur' of the marginalized, which leads us to an analysis of the lyrics in order to understand how two gendered, classed subjects, in the form of a male welfare officer and a female welfare recipient, are constructed lyrically/discursively.

The broader historical discourse on class and social welfare.

It is impossible to understand 'The Slum Mums', a song in which a welfare officer castigates a single mother for being on welfare, without an understanding of the wider political and societal discourses that underpin it. Skeggs (2005, p.45) argues that class disappeared from the academic radar at the exact moment that economic division reached unprecedented heights in the UK. Simultaneously there was an emergence of a political rhetoric of inclusion, classlessness, and social mobility (Skeggs 2005, p.47 cited in Tyler 2008, p.20). The problematic concept of the 'Underclass',ⁱⁱⁱ popularized by Charles Murray, ultimately created a 'moral panic' (Cohen, 1972) in an increasingly polarised society, and "the

subsequent neoliberal reordering of public policy under the aegis of Thatcherism, Reaganism and the ascendance of the New Right” (Hayward & Yar 2006, p.10).

As such, in political debate the Moral Underclass Discourse stresses ‘moral’ and ‘cultural’ sources of poverty and exclusion, and is primarily obsessed with the ‘moral hazard’ of welfare dependency (Levitas 2000, p.360), with the majority of the political establishment pontificating about how excessive resources are exhausted through such things as welfare payments (see, for example, Allen 2009). Such discourses reaffirm long established beliefs about the ‘dangerous’ working class who are professed to be a major hazard to the moral and social order (see Tyler 2008; Tyler 2011; Wilson & Huntington, 2005; Devereux et al. 2011; Lens 2002; Golding and Middleton 1982; Skeggs, 1997; Wood and Skeggs, 2008), non-contributors to affluence and over contributors to decline (Skeggs 2004, 2005; Morris, 1994; Hayward & Yar, 2006; Law, 2006; Levitas, 2003).

Over time, the New Labour governments of Blair and Brown created “an implicit link between parenting and blame”, stressing that parents needed to be given the ‘skills’ to enable social mobility and to make ‘empowered’ choices (Gillies 2005). In recent times, young, single, working-class mothers have been subjected to stigma and hatred in the UK cultural context (Tyler 2008, p.26). The figurative function of the ‘feral’ ‘chavette’ Slum Mum is constructed through animalistic commentary as uncontrollably and immorally breeding (Gidley and Rooke 2010 cited in De Benedictis 2012, pp.11-12). As Tyler (2008, p. 26) remarks

“...the chav mum or pramface, with her hooped earrings, sports clothes, pony tail (“Croydon facelift”) and gaggle of mixed race children, is the quintessential sexually excessive, single mother: an immoral, filthy, ignorant, vulgar, tasteless, working-class whore...”.

The widespread dissemination of such negative stereotypes ensures that these single mothers function as convenient scapegoats (Kelly, 1996 cited in Bullock et al. 2001, p.235) to deflect blame from the increasingly obvious shortfalls (i.e. the growing inequality between the very rich and the poor) of global capitalism (Jensen 2012).^{iv} This is even more significant in the context of a move from “redistribution to recognition politics” whereby those groups or individuals who are deemed to be ‘disgusting’ / not respectable are no longer ‘entitled’ to expect the state to provide for their welfare. In essence, those who do not conform to the idealised neoliberal citizen “work as the constitutive limit; the limit to value” (Skeggs 2005, p.977). In these societies further reducing access to welfare entitlements, or the amount of payment these individuals can claim is seen to have “a positive impact as it will force parents and their children to act responsibly and re-integrate into ‘normal’ society” (Barnes and Power 2012, p.7).

Morrissey as a raconteur of the marginalised.

“I am a social writer, a witness, and I cannot stand unfairness.” (Morrissey in interview with Araya, 2015)

As leader of The Smiths, solo-artiste, writer (2013) and most recently, novelist (2015), Morrissey is a figure whose influence and reputation looms large within the popular music scene and beyond.^v Widely acknowledged as a complex, and controversial icon, Morrissey has become the focus of a growing body of academic research which seeks to make sense of his significant contribution to popular culture, particularly in terms of his often counter-hegemonic stances on pertinent contemporary social and political issues (see Bracewell, 2009; Campbell and Coulter 2010; Deranty, 2014; Devereux et al. 2011; Dillane et al. 2014; Hopps, 2009; Martino, 2007; Power et al. 2012; Power et al. 2015; Renyolds and Press, 1995; Zuberi, 2001).

Emerging from a working-class background in Manchester, Morrissey has adopted a broadly critical left-wing and republican (in the European sense of the term) perspective. His often radical and challenging pronouncements have seen him provoke heated argument and debate amongst cultural commentators and his many fans. He has, for example, talked about not recognizing traditional gender binaries or sexual orientations such as 'straight' or 'Gay' (referring to a 'Fourth Gender' and using the term 'Humasexual' to describe himself).^{vi} Although his more recent recordings have extended their focus by engaging with a wider range of themes including specific Chicano/a and Latino/a concerns (see Devereux and Hidalgo, 2015), Northern (White) English working class life loom large in the Morrissey imaginary.^{vii} It is this understanding of the texture of working class life that informs 'Slum Mums'.

In terms of his presentational style, Morrissey's songs are written most often from the point of view of the outsider. In addition to writing carefully crafted poetic songs, which are rich in literary allusion (and irony), Morrissey manages to generate a wide appeal through semantic ambiguity combined with a semiotics of authentic working class experience. Much of the authenticity which fans repeatedly refer to in reference to explaining Morrissey's overall appeal is based on his creative use of social realism and his commitment to dealing with themes which are often rendered invisible or demonized within a popular culture or mass media setting. This is most in evidence in the myriad of references to working class/blue-collar experience. As well as writing about geographically specific themes (focused on his own Irish Catholic Immigrant upbringing in Manchester and more recently on the Latino/a and Chicano/a experience in LA in particular) his lyrics and soundscapes express feelings of loss, alienation and *anomie*. As the perennial outsider, Morrissey is, in Power's (2011) words, 'a raconteur of the marginalized'. In the following section, we evidence how he embodies this position, initially through semantic ambiguity in his lyrics, and later, through his careful and deliberate use of structure and sound, all of which evidence his powerful, multimodal compositional and performance abilities at play.

Creating the Classed Subject through Lyrics

The lyrics^{viii} of 'Slum mums' clearly rehearse a number of classed and gendered discourses, evidencing Morrissey's keen familiarity with such issues. Cleverly, the song is sung from the subject position of a UK welfare officer castigating a welfare-dependent mother and subjecting her to his particular brand of classed

and gendered vitriol. The 'irresponsible' poor and underclass are presented from the outset as overly sexually active – the mother is revealed as having six children by 'six absent fathers.' The welfare-dependent children are described as 'filthy' and in animalistic, scavenging terms as a 'rat-pack brood'. The slum is 'engrained underneath [her] finger nails', like something she cannot wash away. The welfare officer speaks of being 'paid to despise' her 'council house eyes', in a gesture that conflates poverty and stigmatized housing estates with her own bodily appearance and even genetic makeup. The lone mother is accused of being 'a slum mum', of breathing like one (her body having its own particular rhythms), of being unclean, and of 'breeding' like one, in terms of over producing children. She is, in effect, viewed as physically producing the conditions of her own degeneracy.

The welfare officer questions the lone mother's audacity in trying to receive assistance from the state, by castigating that: "*you turn to us for succour because you think we're just suckers*". In addition he strongly expresses that he and others simply 'don't care', while simultaneously admonishing the lone parent and thereby, demonstrating the contempt that many people have for the 'undeserving underclass'. While a specific ethnicity is not mentioned, there is a passing reference to skin-bleaching in which the female lone mother is reminded that even a change of name, skin-colour or accent will not allow her to ever escape from her fixed class and racialized position. From the jaundiced perspective of the welfare officer, the poor and underclass regard the social welfare system as being there to be exploited. The officer goes so far as to imply

that the welfare system deliberately sets out to discourage the legitimate claiming of welfare. The social services offices are:

Strategically placed in a rowdy, dowdy part of town/

To discourage you from signing/

We make you feel as if you're whining/

When you claim what's legally yours/

The welfare officer also states that the (New) Labour government has nothing but disgust for those on welfare. We are twice told that 'The Labour Government^{ix} can't stand 'The Slum Mums'.' It is clear that the social and political matrix in which this mother is operating is a challenging one but one that receives little sympathy from the agents of the state.

The song reaches a dramatic climax when the welfare officer suggests the woman take her vermin children, her 'rat pack brood', far away from the slums to a long-grassed meadow in order to 'administer seven doses lethal and illegal'. The welfare officer's shocking encouragement of 'The Slum Mums' infanticide/suicide appears to suggest that she is better off killing her children, using her own illegally-procured drugs, so as to save them from the indignities of a life spent as a member of the underclass.^x The suggestion references earlier times in the UK where infanticide was used as a means of avoid shame.^{xi} She cannot easily access what is 'legally' hers (benefits) but the procurement of 'illegal' drugs to get rid of the problem seems simple, and she and her children will be quickly and efficiently rendered 'elsewhere'. At this point the lyrics end. Is that really the solution?

In spite of Morrissey's track record of speaking up for the marginalised or his 'authentic' positionality as working-class, it might be argued that the lyrics alone do not seem to be delivering a counter-hegemonic message.^{xiii} In fact, arguably, this song could be understood as underscoring the neoliberal agenda with its powerful incitement of persuasive distaste, even hate. But this is not what we've come to expect of Morrissey, so clearly something is happening in the song's structure, in its very sonic textures, that leads us to an interpretation other than this obvious literal-lyrical one. We argue this is found in the song's structure, melodic lines, use of Morrissey's particular voice, and instrumentation, all of which play into gendered discourse and emotional manipulation to creatively subvert the lyrical message with devastating effect. The result is a multi-modal, nuanced and textured piece of work that manipulates the listener into potentially hating the slum mum, but in the end, realising that the real distain needs to be redirected towards those in power who would coldly cast her and her children aside. In order to come to this conclusion, we explore Morrissey's subversive processes by first looking at the social discourse of the female, working-class body as deviant and other, examining how it has been constructed discursively and musically, and sometimes not without contradiction in terms of what female embodiment comes to mean.

Music, Class, and the Gendered, Singing Body

There is a profound moment of recognition of the power of music in George Orwell's seminal novel, *Nineteen Eight-Four* (2003[1949]), when the protagonist Winston Smith hears a female 'prole' (the equivalent of a slum mum) singing a machine-generated and mass-distributed, government-sanctioned nonsense

song as she hangs out clothes on her tenement washing line. Smith is struck by how the woman's voice somehow manages to transform the banal lyrics into something profoundly affective. The sensual female voice seems unaware of its potential to subvert the status quo and be the undoing of men. Significantly, Smith's only other experience of singing is in performing party propaganda songs in unison with his comrades, something that also incites his emotions, though in this case, of barely contained, disciplined and vehement violence and anger, things which are put to use for the good of the party. Both responses speak to the degree to which the affective and the ideological may be bedfellows in musical utterances. The example of the prole foreshadows in our musical analysis of 'The Slum Mums', the over productive yet sensual, working class female body, the *grain* of whose voice (Barthes 1977)^{xiii}, though silenced in 'Slum Mum's', breaks beyond the bounds of hegemonic discourse captured in ideologically driven, commercial pop songs.^{xiv} Morrissey, like many pop and protest singers, seems to recognize the latent power of the pop song as a vehicle of expression, *par excellence*, that can communicate on multiple levels to working class and middle class audiences, something explored by Bennett et al (2009). In terms of the UK context specifically, Bennett et al's *Culture, Class, Distinction* systematically assesses the relationships between cultural practices and the social divisions of gender, class, and ethnicity in contemporary Britain. While much of this work is a reassessment of ideas of class and taste, especially in the digital age, what is particularly important is the manner in which the authors assess the relationship between cultural capital and inequality.^{xv}

When it comes to thinking about music and the working class body, Fox's (2004, p.152) exploration of the lexical trope of 'feeling' (a concept very prevalent in discussions on consuming popular songs) is particularly important - something he describes as seeking to connect "sensory experience, embodied attitudes, and rational thought to the domain of social relations". This idea of feelingful qualities is particularly pertinent when one considers the degree to which social interactions may become "generic and institutionalised" (Fox 2004, p.153), something which music *itself* is capable of producing and reproducing.^{xvi} Music, then, is an ideological tool and in the discourse specifically on class disgust, a song like 'The Slum Mums' offers an insight into how and why the song might (subversively) perform and rehearse such negative feelings, providing a critique on class relations, from a distinctly gendered perspective, that remains as pertinent now as it did when the song was first written. But Fox's work also highlights the emotional capacity of working class songs and the potential for the working class to construct the self. This tension between self-construction and creation by others is at the heart of any reading of 'Slum Mums'.

In order to appreciate the efficacy of 'Slum Mums' as a song form and performance act, particularly in relation to discourses on gendered, class disgust, it is necessary to briefly survey the manner in which music itself has been feminised as an art form. This in turn leads to a discussion of how feminist critiques of music scholarship in relation to popular music play into the ambivalence around the efficacy of Morrissey's critique within a populist, 'lower-class' genre that is often more concerned with stardom than seeking real social justice through sonic intervention (Brackett 2000, p.172). We insist that any

critical analysis of gendered, class disgust *in popular song form* - a cultural artefact performed by a working class singer - benefits from this perspective as it uncovers and lays bare often unquestioned attitudes around the rights of women, particularly working-class and unemployed women, while simultaneously revealing the gendered work that music does in creating women as sexual beings first and foremost.

In terms of the relationship between music and gender, feminist musicologist, Susan McClary's pioneering work *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (2002[1991]) challenged structural and empirical research in musicology at a time when scholarship declared 'signification' to be off-limits, yet where 'structures' as graphed by theorists, and 'beauty' (see Hanslick 1995, for example) as celebrated by aestheticians evidenced violence, misogyny and racism. As part of her explorative critique, McClary identified the following ways in which musical discourses were gendered: *gender as musically constructed* (utterances based on gender, and musical codes containing social attitudes); *gendered aspects of music theory* (male cadences being 'strong', female cadences being 'weak', as well as binary discourses on attraction and repulsion); *gender and sexuality in narrative* (virile male protagonist, with lighter, wayward secondary female themes to be disciplined and contained); and finally, *music as gendered discourse* (music and musicians as effeminate, and male responses to music emphasising objectivity, rationality, and universality versus female responses as overwrought, emotional, and even histrionic). McClary was focussing on the Western Music canon in *Feminine Endings* but many of her observations are applicable to popular music forms too, given that much of the

language, conventions and practices come from that world.^{xvii} In this and her subsequent book, *Conventional Wisdom* (2000), McClary has argued that because music can organise our perceptions of our gendered bodies and emotions, it can tell us things about history and the contextualized, historical moment that are not always accessible through other mediums. But music doesn't just organise our perceptions. It profoundly shapes how we come to make sense of things, through our body, or senses and our emotions.

Schusterman (2008) explains, through somaesthetic means, that a person is configured by the social and cultural as well as the biological, and that the body and its emotional responses cannot be excluded from any engagement with 'meaning'. Feelings and emotions are both registered, negotiated and shared externally but also felt deeply and profoundly internalized, which feeds back into society. This aspect of the operations of the feeling being in everyday life is examined at length in Tia De Nora's work (2003) which examines the manner in which we are moved, in terms of how aesthetics and performance can be manipulated. Music is therefore "a cultural resource in the social construction of emotions" (Sloboda 2003, p.17; also see Finnegan 2003), particularly where that resource has been gendered. This social construction manifests in individual and collective bodies. For a song like 'Slum Mums', its meaning and affective dimensions reside not just in social constructions of mothers on social welfare, but on how the protagonist (the welfare officer) sings his disgust which is not just discursive, but is deeply felt and embodied in the song structure. It manipulates us to feel the same disgust, and for that to inform our beliefs.

Popular music scholar, Sheila Whitely, has written extensively on the manner in which women are socially constructed through songs. Citing Simone de Beauvoir that one is not born a woman but rather becomes one, Whitely (2005, p. 65) points out that “feminist would generally agree that girls, like women are socially constructed rather than biologically given...in different ways in different social and historical contexts”. Whitely (2005, p. 65) demonstrates how the conflation of ...girl...babe, baby and mama (which has its origins in the blues) in Joplin’s late sixties live performance of ‘Tell Mama’ was essentially a “sexually knowledgeable exchange” between the singer and her audience. This point might be extended to Morrissey’s ‘Slum mum’, a figure of a particular moment in time (and geographic space), configured by that very English of terms, “mum’, whom was very much in the public eye and therefore highly topical for the politically aware Morrissey.

Given his sexual ambiguity, Morrissey is an interesting figure as the performer of this song, but, of course, it is not he, per se, that is constructing the slum mum but rather the male civil servant Morrissey is envoicing. By giving all of the ‘lines’ to this man, Morrissey is actually underscoring the “fiercely patriarchal basis for constructing appropriate codes for behaviour and identity’ of women” as Whitely puts it (2005 p. 67). The bottom line is that slum mum is a ‘bad girl’, thereby establishing ‘the ideological terrain for the three as of abuse, abjection and alienation’ (Whitely 2005, p. 67). There is only one moment where the slum mum attempts to construct her own identity, through changing her accent, a moment where she “refuses to enact the ascribed identity\the codes we live by” (Whitely 2005, p. 69). As a creative artist, Morrissey would also be patently aware of the working women’s bodies as sites of ‘contradiction, conflict and

tension' (Whitely 2005, p. 69), the very elements that form the basis of Morrissey's critical, performance and singing style. Moreover, as someone who is also ambivalent about gender and sexuality, Morrissey is particularly well positioned to understand how emotions have been gendered in musical form too. 'Reason' is often constructed as masculine, and 'emotion', particularly in terms of musical form, is constructed as female, and where 'reasoned emotion' is about control, discipline and manipulation. The very fact that this song endeavours to be about control discipline and manipulation but gradually reveals itself to be a song of uneven structure and instability is precisely why it works so well as a critique. Therefore, in the following section, we go back to the song once again, but this time take into account the manner in which the music and lyrics work together, along with the very specific 'grain' of Morrissey's voice, to generate potential reactions and meanings which ultimately culminate in devastating critique.

'Structures of Feelings'^{xviii} in 'Slum Mums'

A close musical reading of 'Slum Mum' reveals multiple ways in which the music acts as a gendered matrix, drawing upon binary conventions in terms of structure and form, but especially in relation to the gendered, emotional aspect of music, which in this specific song act as an overwrought foil or contradiction to the neutrally delivered but altogether misogynistic lyrics of the song, underscoring the gendered, class disgust that is at the centre of the narrative. As Langer has argued (cited in Blacking 1995, p. 36), "music can reveal the nature of feelings with a detail and truth that language cannot approach." The following section leans into a basic harmonic outline of the song (fig 1) and our more

complete transcription of the song (fig 2) which displays the vocal melody line (with occasional lyrics inserted), the framing and underpinning chords in relation to the melody and the overall rhythmic and metric structure of the song. Our approach here draws upon Moore (2012) where the focus is on the interaction of music and everyday words and, in particular, on the consequences of such theorisations.

[place figure 1 and 2 somewhere near here]

Like all clever ‘emotional designs’ (Norton 2005), this song crafts and manipulates our emotional responses to devastating ends. From the very outset of the song, listeners are placed in an uncomfortable sonic world. The song opens with a distinct guitar riff in the minor, historically ‘weak/female’ key, over which is heard a shrill sound sample of children screaming and crying. It is a melodramatic start, meant to startle and irritate and literally somatically embody the disgust communicated in the virulent opening line, ‘six filthy children...from six absent fathers’. These eight chords, moving from D minor to A minor (the tonic) then quickly to E minor and F7, have a somewhat destabilizing effect, starting on chord IV (which we don’t necessarily know is chord IV at this point) but then getting to the tonic by the measure 5, only to be destabilized again with a sequence of Amin – Emin – F7 and C/G (this G foreshadowing the change of key in the ‘chorus’). The listener knows and feels (s)he is in a moment of tension and instability.

In terms of the song's melody and execution, ventriloquist-like, Morrissey assumes the position of the welfare officer with what should be a vitriolic and scathing verbal assault on a female lone mother in terms of the content.^{xix} Yet his male subject voice, with its smooth, persuasive grain, is in stark contrast with the insidious message of the song. Staying within the five-note, contained range of A-E, he intones reasonably and seductively. He croons us on side and in doing so he seems to help us rehearse our disgust, almost unaware (and so, we become complicit in a neo-liberal positionality, at least for the present). But something is amiss. The logic of the rhetoric is not clearly supported by a concomitant logic in the music, which itself is not in a clear and rational/structurally repetitive verse chorus form with easily performed and repeatable lines throughout. The overall song can be broadly cast into a verse, chorus, verse, chorus with coda schema. The first 'verse' starts with 'six filthy children' (bar 9) and the second with 'the offices' (bar 33). But it is important to note that the underpinning harmonic structures and the manner in which each of these verses starts and are subsequently constructed differs. While the first verse begins into the third beat of the bar and follows the E min, G, E min, D7 riff, the second verse actually starts with the harmonic material that precedes the opening verse, i.e. with the chord sequence found in measure 1-8. In other words, the opening harmonic sequence of the song is now integrated into the structure of the second verse. The first verse starts in a rather uncertain fashion but the second verse is more confident, with a growing sense of the rightness of the protagonist's voice. But there is another way to look at it. The first verse is technically a line longer or starts earlier than the second verse, which really has only two lines. So perhaps the arguments being made by the welfare officer are not holding up or are proving

unsustainable or are dissipating the longer he goes on. Either way, the verses differ, eliding and causing confusion; seemingly the same but not the same really.

The 'chorus' starts, arguably, at bar 21 though it seems more fully fledged as a chorus from bar 25 - 'but you won't escape' - which seems to reach a logical conclusion four bars later, suggesting a closed unit on reaching the section 'because you live a breathe like one' (bar 28). But somewhat unexpectedly, it runs forward for another line wavering on the semi-quavers 'and the labour government"), climaxing on a grating tritone interval (D sharp - A) with an underpinning tonic chord of A min, which then moves back to chord IV for the second verse. The melodic contour of the (ostensible) chorus intoning slum mum (bars 26 and 46 respectively) with its downward, downbeat gesture, recalls a kind of derisive football chant, its long drawn out broad vowels inviting uncritical participation - 'slum mums, slum mums, slum mums'.

In its second iteration, from bar 41 (or really bar 45), the 'chorus' material, though for the most part the same, has a distinctly different character where it uses a B major chord to module up to C major, a half-step and harmonically illogical move, again underpinning the flawed 'logic' of the argument used by the welfare office. At this point the song moves into new terrain, into a kind of coda where the words are more slowly and deliberately rendered in a monotone, encouraging infanticide (bars 53-60), the I-IV chords dominating and the melodic materials moving in downward gestures, falling syllables, signifying termination.

In sum, there isn't a clean internal logic to the verse and the chorus, both of which change in each rendition and whose starting points are unclear. Undoubtedly, there is repetition of melodic lines present, but the overall song is actually quite difficult to sing, with its shift in tonal centres and variable word spacing, sometimes with syllables placed on long held notes, other times on rapid moving semi-quavers, changing, as Moore (2003, p.43) notes, the 'verbal space' in terms of speed and intensity. Herein lies the emotional design where the song structure sets up a very interesting dialectic between *what* is being said (through the lyrics) as appearing to be reasonable, and *how* it is said (through the music), as betraying an illogical and emotional argument that is inconsistent, and additive, and rhythmically uneven, though a smooth voice tries to keep it all in check persuasively. The rhetoric powerfully and persuasively takes us along to what to all intents and purposes promises to be a logical conclusion - infanticide. This is boldly and calculatingly set within the texture of a IV-I plagal or 'Amen' chord – its religious connotations being brutally and deftly referenced here with great irony and ambiguity by Morrissey. The final moment of the coda hangs, unresolved in terms of musical structure, a kind of McClary-esque 'feminine ending' that is followed by a guitar solo which mimics the screaming from the opening of the song as well as reproducing the wail of an ambulance. The song ends abruptly on the E minor chord, unresolved and terminated before its time, just like the mother and children. There is a strong structural suggestion of no escape, of being caught in a loop. Perhaps this gesture is meant to indicate the trap of the welfare system, but maybe the real trap is the discursive field in which this mother has limited agency.

And where is the 'slum mum' in all of this? Crucially, throughout the song we never get hear the woman's response. She has no voice here (unlike her prole counterpart in *Nineteen Eight-Four*). The only place we get a glimpse of her subject position is in the welfare officers patronising comment about the 'slum mum' trying to hide her working-class voice with a higher status one that would belie her origins. The vocal line becomes a falsetto, leaping up sharply on the 'don't' of 'camouflage your accent, so that even you don't recognise it", the welfare officer derisively imitating a false middle or upper class accent in the upward curve of the melody in measure 24, which reaches up as high as high G, the 7th note of the A minor scale (though the accidental F sharp signals a modulation to G, a different oppositional key). Not only is the slum mum, copper-fastened as deceptive, but also her overwrought emotionality, her histrionic shrillness performs very common gendered musical code for females.

Such a negotiated reading of the dominant or hegemonic codes or discourses (Hall 1999; 2000[1997]), has the potential to evoke a more compassionate or understanding view of 'The Slum Mums' of this world. To borrow from Brackett (2000, p. 172), and interpolating the song under scrutiny here, "the conditions of [Slum Mums] production and reception exemplify many of the paradoxes between art and commerce, political integrity and financial practicality". We argue that in assuming the role of the welfare officer who taunts and blames the lone mother, Morrissey's envoicing / ventriloquism actually has the potential to force audiences to deal with their own prejudices (Rogan, 1993 p.300). Further, as Keith Negus (1996, p.220) writes (citing Lawrence Gossberg, 1992) "music works 'at the intersection of the body and emotions', and in doing so can

generate 'affective alliances' between people, which in turn can create the energy for social change that many have a direct impact on politics and culture". The potential for song as social commentary to change our views, or, at the very least, reflect prevalent discourses, remains compelling.^{xx}

'Slum Mum's' Today.

When this song was first written, gendered and classed discourses surrounding welfare recipients were prevalent but in recent years this process has intensified. We are in agreement with Jensen (2014) who argues that what has become known as poverty porn has multiplied across the UK television landscape (as indeed is the case elsewhere), re-instating classification processes of moral worth and in the process "produced "the welfare 'scrounger/skiver', an abject figure whose existence seems to justify new forms of economic punishment and conditional welfare." The widespread use of the Moral Underclass Discourse (Levitas, 2000) has seen the demonization of society's most vulnerable people become an endemic feature of contemporary political and popular discourse. In essence, "the media, popular entertainment and the political establishment have gone out of their way to convince us that these are moral issues, an indiscipline that needs to be rectified" (Jones 2011, p.195). Discourses which talk of the "spatialisation of whole areas of Britain" abound, implying that the Slum Mum is spreading "her wayward ways generationally and infectiously through parenting" (De Benedictis 2012, pp.11-12). Indeed, the current British Prime Minister, David Cameron (cited in Jones 2011, p.77) champions an ideology in which mothers (in particular) are increasingly expected to take responsibility for engineering a way out of poverty and

exclusion for themselves and their children (MacDonald et al. 2001 cited in Allen and Taylor 2012, p.1). Rather than framing women's poverty in terms of structural causes like inadequate child care and low wages, these discourses, which present the poor as undeserving of sympathy and public support, do little to improve public understanding of poverty and ultimately fuel anti-welfare sentiment (Gans, 1995). It is in this context that the work a song like 'Slum Mum's' does, in the current age of austerity, is therefore doubly important. It operates as a protest song in that it reminds us that we are making the same mistakes and falling back into the same poisonous rhetoric, while simultaneously showing us how easy it is to do just that and forget.

Blacking (1995, p.35) may have asserted that "music cannot instill a sense of fellowship" and that "the best it can do is confirm the situation that already exists" but more recent work on somatic embodiment and music might argue otherwise. 'Slum Mums' undoubtedly confirms, in stark terms, the prevalence of gendered and class discourses in relation to welfare mothers, but it also has the potential to dismantle commonly-held prejudices. The song's surface simplicity belies a complex multi-modal piece at work, enticing us to perform gendered, class disgust while simultaneously revealing to us, in shocking terms, just how easy it is to become complicit in an ideology and emotional narrative that can have dire consequences for real people. The shame resides not with the slum mum but with those in power and by exposing this, Morrissey reveals how manipulative this power is, effortlessly recreating this ugly discourse of gendered class disgust and creatively and musically harnessing it to fold back on itself to devastating effect.

References:

- Adorno, T. (2001 [1991]). *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. Ed by J.M. Bernstein. London: Routledge.
- Allen, K. (2009) *Ireland's Economic Crash: A Radical Agenda for Change*, Dublin: The Liffey Press.
- Allen, K. & Taylor, Y. (2012) 'Placing Parenting, Locating Unrest: Failed Femininities, Troubled Mothers and Riotous Subjects', *Studies in the Maternal: Special Edition - Austerity Parenting*, 4(2), available: [http://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/back issues/4 2/documents/AllenTaylor SiM 4\(2\) 2012.pdf](http://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/back%20issues/4%20documents/AllenTaylor%20SiM%202012.pdf)
- Barthes, R. (1977) *Image, Music, Text*. Trans Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Want.
- Barnes, C. & Power, M. (2012) 'Internalizing Discourses of Parental Blame: Voices from the Field', *Studies in the Maternal: Special Edition - Austerity Parenting*, 4(2), available: [http://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/back issues/4 2/documents/BarnesPower SiM 4\(2\).pdf](http://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/back%20issues/4%20documents/BarnesPower%20SiM%202012.pdf)
- Bennett, T., Savage, M. , Bortolaia Silva, E., Warde, A. , Gayo-Cal, M. , & Wright, D. (2009) *Culture, Class, Distinction*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Blacking, J. (1995) 'Expressing Human Experience through Music' in *Music, Culture and Experience: Selected Papers of John Blacking*, R. Byron, ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Brackett, D. (2000) *Interpreting Popular Music*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press.
- Bracewell, M. (2009) *England is Mine: Poplife in Albion*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Bullock, H., Fraser Wyche, K., & Williams, W. (2001) 'Media Images of the Poor', *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(2), 229-246.
- Campbell, S. & Coulter, C. (eds.) (2010) *Why Pamper Life's Complexities? Essays on The Smiths*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Cohen, S. (1972) *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, London: Martin Robertson & Co.
- Cook, N. (1998) *Music: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cooke, D. (1959) *The Language of Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

De Benedictis, S. (2012) 'Feral' Parents: Austerity parenting under neoliberalism', *Studies in the Maternal: Special Edition - Austerity Parenting*, 4(2), available: [http://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/back_issues/4_2/documents/DeBenedictis_SiM_4\(2\)2012.pdf](http://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/back_issues/4_2/documents/DeBenedictis_SiM_4(2)2012.pdf)

DeNora, T. (2003) "Aesthetic agency and musical practice: new directions in the sociology of music and emotion." *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research*. Juslin, P & and Sloboda, J (eds). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 161-180.

Devereux, E. (2006) 'Being Wild(e) About Morrissey' in M. Corcoran and M. Peillion (eds) *Uncertain Ireland*. Dublin: IPA.

Devereux, E. (2010) 'Heaven Knows We'll Soon Be Dust: Catholicism and Devotion in The Smiths', in Coulter, C., & Campbell, S. (eds.) *Why Pamper Life's Complexities? Essays on The Smiths*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 65-80.

Devereux, E. (2009), 'I'm not the man you think I am: authenticity, ambiguity and the cult of Morrissey', in E. Haverinen, U. Kovala and V. Rautavuoma (ed.), *Cult, Community, Identity*. Finland: Research Center for Contemporary Culture of the University of Jyväskylä.

Devereux, E., Dillane, A., & Power M. (eds.) (2011) *Morrissey: Fandom, Representations and Identities*, Bristol: Intellect Books.

Devereux, Eoin and Melissa Hidalgo. (2015) "Your Gonna Need Someone On Your Side: Morrissey's Latino/a and Chicano/a Fans." *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies* 12.2.

Dillane, A., Devereux, E. & Power, M. (2014) 'I Can Have Both: A Queery Reading of Morrissey' in *The European Journal of Popular Culture* 5(20).
<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Article.id=18826/>

Finnegan, R. (2003) "Music, Experience, and the Anthropology of Emotion." *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*. Clayton, M., Herbert, T., & Middleton, R. (eds). London and New York: Routledge, 181-192.

Fox, A. (2004) *Real Country: Music and Language in Working-Class Culture*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Frith, S. (1998) 'Playing with A Different Sex' in *Music for Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 154-157.

Frith, S. & Goodwin, A., eds. (1990) *On Record: Pop and the Written Word*, London: Routledge.

Gans, H. (1995). *The War Against The Poor: The Underclass And Antipoverty Policy*, New York: Basic Books.

Gammon, V. (2008). *Desire, Drink and Death in English Folk and Vernacular Song, 1600-1900*. Aldershot, Hampshire, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate

Gillies, V. (2005) Raising the Meritocracy: Parenting and the Individualisation of Social Class. *Sociology*, 39(5): 835-852.

Goddard, S. (2009) *Mozipedia: The Encyclopedia of Morrissey and The Smiths*. London: Ebury Press.

Gutstein, D. (2012) Generational Conflict: Neo-liberalism's New Bait-and-Switch Ploy. *Rabble*. Available: <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/donald-gutstein/2012/02/generational-conflict-neoliberalism%E2%80%99s-new-bait-and-switch-plo>

Hanslick, E. (1995 [1974]) *The Beautiful in Music: A Contribution to the Revisal of Musical Aesthetics*. 7th ed. Trans. & Rev by Gustav Cohen. New York: Da Capo Press.

Hawkins, S. (2009) *The Great British Pop Dandy: Masculinity, Popular Music and Culture*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Hayward, K., & Yar, M. (2006) 'The 'chav' phenomenon: Consumption, media and the construction of a new underclass', *Crime Media Culture*, 2(1), 9-28.

Hopps, G. (2009). *Morrissey: The Pageant of His Bleeding Heart*. London and New York: Continuum.

Hubbs, N. (1996) 'Music of the "fourth gender": Morrissey and the sexual politics of melodic contour', in Foster, T., Stiegel C. & Berry, E. (eds) *Bodies of Writing, Bodies in Performance*. New York: New York University Press, 266-296.

Jensen, T. (2012). 'Tough Love in Tough Times', *Studies in the Maternal: Special Edition -Austerity Parenting*, 4(2), available: [http://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/back issues/4 2/documents/Jensen SiM 4\(2\)2012.pdf](http://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/back%20issues/4%20documents/Jensen%20SiM%204(2)2012.pdf)

Jensen, T. (2014) "Skivers/strivers and the classificatory politics of welfare reform." *Critical Perspectives on Youth, Community and Urban Regeneration Seminar Series*. U of Limerick, Limerick. 9 Apr.

Jones, O. (2011) *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class*. London: Verso.

Law, A. (2006) 'Hatred and Respect: The Class Shame of Ned 'Humour', *Variant*, 25, 28-30.

Lens, V. (2002) 'Public voices and public policy: Changing the societal discourse on welfare', *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 29(1), 137-154.

Levitas, R. (2003) 'The Idea of Social Inclusion', accepted for *2003 Social Inclusion Research Conference Ottawa*, March 27-28, available:
<http://www.ccsd.ca/events/inclusion/chapters/rlevitas.htm>.

Levitas, R. (2000) 'What is Social Exclusion?', in Gordon, D. and Townsend, P., (eds), *Breadline Europe*, Bristol: The Policy Press, 357-364.

Martino, P. (2007) "I am a living sign: a semiotic reading of Morrissey." *International Journal of Applied Semiotics* 6(1): 103-119.

McClary. S. (2000). *Conventional Wisdom*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

McClary, S. (2002[1991]). *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, & Sexuality*, 2nd. ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Middleton, R. (1990) *Studying Popular Music*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Moore, A. F., ed. (2003) *Analyzing Popular Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moore, A. F. (2012) *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

Morris, L. (1994) *Dangerous Classes: The Underclass and Social Citizenship*, London: Routledge.

Morrissey, S. (2013) *Autobiography*. London: Penguin Classics.

Morrissey, S. (2015) *List of the Lost*. London: Penguin

Nayak, A., and Kehily, M.J. (2014) "'Chavs, chavettes and pramface girls': teenage mothers, marginalised young men and the management of stigma." *Journal of Youth Studies* 17(10), 1330-1345.

Negus, K. (1996) *Popular Music in Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Norton, D. (2005) *Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things*. New York: Basic.

O'Flynn, M., Monaghan, L., & Power, M. (2014) 'Scapegoating During a Time of Crisis: A Critique of Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland'. *Sociology*, 48 (5), 921-937.

Ortony, A, Norman, D. A. & Revelle, W. (2004) "The role of affect and proto-affect in effective functioning" *Who needs emotions? The brain meets the machine*, Fellous, J. M. & Arbib, M. A. (eds). New York: Oxford University Press, 173-202.

Orwell, G. (2003[1949]). *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. New York, Plume.

Power, M. (2011) "The Teenage Dad' and 'Slum Mums' are 'Just Certain People I know': Counter hegemonic representations of the working / under class in the works of Morrissey' in Devereux, E., Dillane, A., & Power M. (eds.) *Morrissey: Fandom, Representations and Identities*. Bristol: Intellect Books, 95-118.

Power, M., Dillane, A. and Devereux, E. (2012), 'A push and a shove and the land is ours: Morrissey's counter-hegemonic stance(s) on social class'. *Critical Discourse Studies* 9(4), 375-392.

Power, M. Dillane, A. & Devereux, E. (2015) "I sing out to the youth of the slums": Morrissey and Class Disgust', *Popular Music and Society*, DOI:10.1080/03007766.2015.1072871

Savage, M. (2006). 'The Musical Field', *Cultural Trends*, 15.2-3: 159-74
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09548960600712975>

Schuker, R. (2001) *Understanding Popular Music*, 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge.

Schusterman, R. (2008) *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Skeggs, B. (2005) 'The Making of Class and Gender through Visual Moral Subject Formation', *Sociology*, 39(5), 965-982.

Skeggs, B. (2004). *Class, Self, Culture*. London: Routledge.

Skeggs, B., (1997) *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable*, London, Sage.

Symonds, D. A. (2004) *Women, Ballads, and Infanticide in Early Modern Scotland*. State College: Penn State University Press.

Tyler, I. (2011) *Revolting Subjects*. London: Zed Books.

Tyler, I. (2008) "'Chav Mum Chav Scum' Class disgust in contemporary Britain', *Feminist Media Studies*, 8(1), 17-34.

Walser, R. (1993) *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*. Hanover, N. H.: University Press of New England.

Whitely, S. (2005) *Too Much Too Young: Popular Music, age and gender*. London: Routledge.

Williams, R. (2001 [1961]) *The Long Revolution*. Calgary: Broadview Press.

Wilson, H., & Huntington, A. (2005) 'Deviant (M)others: The Construction of Teenage Motherhood in Contemporary Discourse', *Journal of Social Policy*, 35(10), 59-76.

Wood H. & Skeggs, B. 2008. Spectacular Morality: Reality Television, Individualisation and the Re-making of the Working Class. In: Hesmondhalgh, D. and Toynbee, J. (eds). *The Media and Social Theory*. London: Routledge, 177-193.

Zuberi, N. (2001) 'The last truly British people you will ever know: The Smiths, Morrissey and Britpop' in *Sounds English: Transnational Popular Music*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 17-72.

ⁱ As his band's musical director, Boorer, in particular, has been central to the establishment of the Morrissey sound.

ⁱⁱ This will depend, of course, on the manner in which a song has been recorded and how the various textures are foregrounded or submersed. For an extended discussion of this in relation to recorded popular music forms specifically, see Moore (2012). For a more extended discussion of the grain of the voice and the voice as sensuous/gendered, see Frith (1988) on 'playing with a different sex' and the voices of women.

ⁱⁱⁱ A significant body of literature challenges these assertions (see, for example, Nayak and Kehily 2014, for an excellent overview).

^{iv} See for example O'Flynn, Monaghan and Power for a discussion of the use of scapegoating as a deflective strategy in explaining the causes and impact of the financial crisis in Ireland.

^v See Devereux, Dillane and Power (2011) for a discussion of Morrissey fandom.

^{vi} For further discussion see Dillane, Devereux & Power (2014) analysis on the song 'I Can Have Both' by Morrissey. Also see (1996) for an exploration of the 'fourth gender' and 'melodic contours'

^{vii} So too do an array of queer icons, most notably Oscar Wilde and James Dean. See Hawkins 2009.

^{viii} Copyright issues prevent us from printing the full lyric here, but they can be accessed at www.passionsjustlikemine.com, and a performance of the song (the performance that forms the basis for the music transcription we provide later), can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LVYZ_m5_Ig.

^{ix} In the UK at that time New Labour was far more enthusiastic about the Neo-Liberal agenda than even Thatcher dared to be (Byrne 2005, p.56 cited in Power 2011, p.110) In this regard, Morrissey further signaled his hostility to Neo-Liberal policies with the lines "I've been dreaming of a time when the English are sick to death of Labour and Tories" in 'Irish Blood, English Heart', which he released in May 2004.

^x An earlier Morrissey/Stephen Street song 'Interesting Drug' celebrated (or at the very least refused to condemn) the use of drugs by the underclass to escape the misery of their existence (see Power, Dillane and Devereux, 2012). 'The Slum Mums' is ostensibly far bleaker.

^{xi} There is much evidence of this practice documented in British folk song. Gammon (2008) and Symonds (2004), both explore this particular gendered and classed topic in oral folk balladry, a form that feeds into British popular music more widely.

^{xii} We are keenly aware that there is potential to misread the lyrics (particularly without the necessary cultural capital). Equally, a critique might be leveled that Morrissey is fetishizing poverty and the working class for his own financial gain, though this is not the conclusion we come to here.

^{xiii} As well as thinking about the voice as identified by its specific 'grain' there is another meaning at play here. A singer is often forced to sing 'against the grain' or contrary to expectation, by adapting and subverting traditions and expectations in creative and compelling ways. Moreover, the 'grain' of voice, is a site of the "dual production of language" (meaning) and "of music" (Barthes 1977: 181).

^{xiv} In terms of these party songs, Orwell (2003[1949]) devastatingly underscores the manner in which humans can be co-opted into rehearsing emotions that affect behaviours and practices, especially to towards others, often with serious consequences. Even Winton, with his ability to critique and understand the powerful somatic responses songs generate, would still find his body betraying him, allowing him to be manipulated by the strong physiological responses rhythm and pitch and sonority generated in him. We argue that 'Slum Mums' has the capacity to act in the same way and that is the potency of its critique. While we do not make direct, causal links between the content of Orwell's book and Morrissey's 'Slum Mums' (we do not have evidence Morrissey read Orwell, though we very much suspect he did), both Penguin classic authors deal with the rhetoric of politicians in resonant ways. From our perspective, the allusion to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* functions on multiple levels which undergirds our analysis and argument here about 'Slum Mums'.

^{xv} Also see Savage (2006) where the author shows that that age and ethnicity in particular, and gender, educational qualifications and occupational class, strongly condition taste for both musical genres and works

^{xvi} Though Fox is specifically talking about American country music, his ideas are equally applicable here, particularly when married to approaches from Middleton (1990), Cook (1998), and Schuker (2001), with their respective neo-Marxist approaches to music scholarship.

^{xvii} For perspectives on gender in heavy metal music, see Walser's 1993 groundbreaking work in this area. Walser's work is also useful in the manner in which it shifts the focus squarely on the music, rather than emphasizing the lyrics.

^{xviii} A term attributed to Raymond Williams, 'structures of feelings' largely refers to the gap that emerges between official discourse and popular responses to such discourses (in relation to governance, policy, regulation), etc. As such, a popular song can be viewed as, in itself, as a structure of feeling. Williams coined the phrase in 1954 and developed it in his 1961 publication (see Williams 2001). That work has further significance in the context of this paper as it documents the rise of the popular press in Britain and made a significant contribution to the development of cultural studies which in turn has shaped popular music studies.

^{xix} Morrissey's long-standing strategy of envoicing or acting as a ventriloquist has allowed him to adopt and explore a range of controversial positions and ultimately expose problematic discourses more effectively. He has, for example, used this device to expose racism ('Bengali in Platforms') and (Irish) religious institutional child abuse ('Children in Pieces').

^{xx} There are a number of well-known contemporary popular culture treatments of the underclass, welfare benefit abuse, and stigmatisation, such as the TV documentary series "We All Pay Your Benefits," "On Benefits and Proud," "Benefits Britain 1949," and "Benefit Street."